

**LISTING OF CLAIMS**

1-8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) A method for picking up and handling filled, sealed, rectangular pouches where each of said pouches comprises two lateral films with a U-shaped folded bottom film between the lateral films and where the pouches stand on one of two longitudinal sides and said pouches are arranged in parallel in a row, said pouches having a facing upper longitudinal side, and wherein said pouches are picked up with a gripper mechanism having finger-like gripper elements that are arranged in a comb-like manner, wherein the gripper elements are moved in a parallel path between adjacent upper longitudinal sides of adjacent pouches, in a longitudinal direction of the upper longitudinal sides, from the bottom side of the pouches.

10. (original) A method according to claim 9, wherein a row of 5 to 100 pouches is simultaneously gripped.

11. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the gripping mechanism has gripper elements between which an upper longitudinal side of a pouch can be gripped for each pouch to be picked up at least one of which is movable or has movable elements.

12. (original) A method according to claim 11, wherein said movable element is an extendable piston enabling a longitudinal side of a pouch to be picked up in clamping manner.

13. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein a main extension plane may be identified for each pouch, which plane substantially contains all the lateral edges of said the respective pouch[[es]], and where the pouches are gripped in an orientation in which the main extension plane of each pouch is inclined to the vertical by an angle of less than 60°.

14. (previously presented) A method according to claim 12, wherein the main extension plane of each pouch to be gripped is substantially vertical.

15. (previously presented) A method according to claim 9 wherein the longitudinal side on which each pouch stands has a horizontal orientation.